

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MILI, TH

SUBJ: NEWS REPORTS: U.S. MILITARY REDUCTION IN THAILAND

1. ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILY THE NATION REPORTED TODAY THAT AN ECONOMIC STUDY SHOWS IT IS QUOTE NOT FEASIBLE AT PRESENT UNQUOTE TO DEVELOP UTAPAO INTO AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THE STUDY, AN QUOTE AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE UNQUOTE TOLD THE NEWSPAPER, REVEALS THAT CIVILIAN USE OF THE BASE WOULD YIELD QUOTE LOW ECONOMIC RETURN IN THE NEAR FUTURE UNQUOTE AND QUOTE RESTRICT ROYAL THAI NAVY OPERATIONS. UNQUOTE

2. ANOTHER NATION ARTICLE TODAY SAID QUOTE THE LABOR DEPARTMENT PLANS TO EXPORT TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE 30,000 AMERICAN AIRBASE WORKERS WHO WILL BE UNEMPLOYED FOLLOWING FULL WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM THAILAND. UNQUOTE

QUOTING LABOR DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL VICHIT SAENGTHONG, THE NATION SAID THAILAND QUOTE HAS TO EXPORT THESE WORKERS AS THEY HAVE BEEN USED TO HIGH SALARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND REFUSED TO TAKE LOWER PAID JOBS IN THAILAND. UNQUOTE

HE REMAKRED THAT MOST OF THE LABORERS WOULD GO TO THE MIDDLE EAST WHERE QUOTE WELDERS, CARPENTERS, CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND ELECTRICIANS ARE IN BIG DEMAND...UNQUOTE

3. COMMENT: NEITHER ARTICLE SEEMS PARTICULARLY ACCURATE. INADEQUATE FUNDS AND LACK OF PLANNING MAY STAND IN THE WAY OF DEVELOPING UTAPAO INTO AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THE MINIMAL ROYAL THAI NAVY OPERATIONS THERE HARDLY SEEM A MAJOR OBSTACLE, BUT THAI NAVY HAS NEVER BEEN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT COMMERCIALIZATION OF LAND PRESENTLY CONTROLLED BY IT IN THE UTAPAO-SATTAHIP AREA, AND THE STORY MIGHT REPRESENT A NAVY ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE THE AIRPORT IDEA.

4. EMBASSY AWARE OF TALKS BETWEEN LABOR DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR VICHIT, AND BROWN AND ROOT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, AT WHICH POSSIBILITY OF HIRING SOME THAI WORKERS FOR PROJECT TO BUILD HARBOR IN SOUTHEASTERN IRAN WAS DISCUSSED. THESE PLANS ARE STILL VERY TENTATIVE, HOWEVER, AND BROWN AND ROOT WAS THEN TALKING ABOUT A LABOR FORCE OF FOUR TO SEVEN THOUSAND RECRUITED FROM ALL OVER ASIA OF WHICH THAI WORKERS MIGHT BE A APART.
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